

Potential Public Safety/Criminal Justice Legislative Issues - 2004

1. Supplemental Funding for the State Gang Strike Force

Last session the funding for the gang strike force was dramatically reduced. After the session the Department of Public Safety and the Governor announced some restored funding, but not to the previous level. Even though the 2004 session is not a budget session, supplemental funding needs to be appropriated to restore the funding level. Also, structural changes are under consideration to increase the effectiveness of the strike force.

2. Extension of Metro Radio Board Sunset Date

The Metropolitan Radio Board is statutorily set to sunset in June of 2004. Last session the Board was unsuccessful in extending the sunset date and will pursue the extension for next session. Consideration needs to be given to the potential for a “take over” of the Metropolitan Radio Board by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and how to address the issue of reimbursement to the City for participation expenses.

3. 911 Surcharge Increase for Public Safety Answering Points

For several years the City has led an initiative to increase the telephone surcharge for 911 services to provide 911 centers with additional funding. A mere .50 increase was approved 2 years ago, but this does not provide adequate funding to deal with increased technology demands. Last session this fee was increased, but none of the additional money was directed towards 911 centers.

4. PBX Restrictions

When facilities utilize a multi-line telephone system (PBX), a call to 911 may not generate the exact location of the caller. This delays the response of public safety and medical officials. Last session, the 911 professional organizations and the American Heart Association sponsored legislation that required minimal standards for PBX systems and public education about the systems.

5. Night Court/Nuisance Court

The City is exploring options outside of the Fourth Judicial District to create a nuisance court or some type of summary diversion program. As the City progresses on this initiative, some legislative changes may be required to implement a program. This will be considered a “place holder” on the legislative agenda, pending council directive.

6. City Attorney Case Management System Funding Through Surcharge

The City Attorney's office is in need of a case management system. Last session the City introduced a bill to fund part of the system through a surcharge on certain criminal offenses. The bill did not advance, because of lack of clarity on the cost of a new system and maintenance costs. Also last session, many new surcharges were enacted, but we weren't able to include any dedication of funding towards a case management system. Does the City want to pursue this item again next session?

7. Chronic Offenders/Enhancement of Certain Crimes to Felony Levels

To address the issue of chronic offenders, and attempt to hold them more accountable for their crimes, amendments to the criminal code have been suggested to elevate certain crimes to the felony level. The areas suggested for amendment are number of theft convictions within a certain time period, indecent exposure, and interference with privacy. The City Attorney's office may have additional offenses to include in this list.

8. 911 Consolidation – Mandated Statewide Study

The Department of Public Safety will be studying the consolidation of 911 services and will report back to the Legislature during the 2004 session with a report and recommendations. The study has not begun and we are currently seeking to have 911 input into the study group. This will be a "place holder" issue and the City should consider what, if any, position to take on recommendations.

9. Photo Cops

The Association of Metropolitan Municipalities currently has a policy position that calls for the authorization of photo cops. The City endorses the legislative agenda of this association, but can also include this as an item in the City's legislative agenda.

10. CriMNet Funding

Support the ongoing funding and development of the CriMNet system which enables the sharing of criminal justice information across jurisdictions.

11. Data Practices Issues

Allowable sharing of mental health data between law enforcement, corrections, the courts and service agencies is confusing and frustrating. Legislative clarification or authority needs to be provided to allow for the proper administration of persons with mental illness when law enforcement officials detain them.

12. Local Government Administrative Processes

The Legislature, or state agencies, may seek to limit cities' authority to establish administrative processes, such as administrative fines for violations of state statute. The City would oppose any such restriction on local governments' authority.